

Some Passives Not Characterized by Universal Rules:

Subjectless Impersonals*

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"Wenn wir ohne vorgefasste Theorie an die Frage herantreten, werden wir darauf zurückgeworfen anzuerkennen, dass ohne Gedanken an ein Subjekt der Vorgang einfach in dieser Form hingestellt werden konnte."

--Jacob Wackernagel, Vorlesungen über Syntax I, 116

Introduction

German impersonal passives certainly seem to allow no superficial subject:

Es wird gearbeitet
it AUX work (pass past)
'People work.'

The evidence that these sentences lack superficial subjects is presented in part I of this paper. A treatment in categorial grammar is proposed.

Part II concerns an alternative treatment in Relational Grammar. Perlmutter (1978) has argued that all impersonal passives be analyzed as having subjects at the 'final' level of analysis. While the postulation of 'final' subjects may be compatible with the absence of superficial subjects, it complicates the grammatical description of German. The complication cannot be justified if one restricts attention to the facts of German grammar.

Perlmutter's justification postulates a universal rule of passive formulated in terms of grammatical relations. According to this Relational Grammar account, all passives, including impersonal passives, result when an object (2) becomes a subject (1) in a clause with a subject (1). Impersonal passives are simply the special case where a dummy 2 becomes a 1. One can describe German passives in these terms, but the use of the dummy ought to require justification.

The purpose of the abstract characterization is clarified in the interaction of the passive with other proposed rules in Relational Grammar. In particular, Perlmutter (1978) claims that one can characterize a large class of predicates which fails to appear in the impersonal passive.

These are the unaccusative predicates--representing those intransitive verbs whose underlying forms show only a 2, which must become a 1. Note that since this 2 → 1 advancement does not occur in a clause with a 1, it is not an example of passive. Perlmutter (1978:10) then further claims that only one such advancement to 1 may occur in a clause ('1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law'). Since unaccusative predicates always involve an advancement to 1, and only one such advancement is possible per clause, no unaccusative predicates may appear in impersonal passives.

The predictive power of this characterization results from the independent characterization of unaccusative predicates--roughly, as those which describe neither willed or volitional acts, nor involuntary bodily processes. The prediction then is that no such predicates may appear in impersonal passives in any language.

In part III of the paper impersonal passives from (A) Lithuanian, (B) Irish, and (C) Estonian are presented which clearly involve predicates with meanings of the unaccusative variety. These passives refute the only clear empirical prediction of the unaccusative hypothesis.

If one were to withdraw the semantic characterization of the unaccusative hypothesis, this might seem to result in a system lacking predictions about impersonal passives, but nonetheless coherent. Part IV, however, presents evidence from (A) German, (B) Lithuanian and (C) Irish that refutes the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law. This shows that there is no internal motivation within the theory of Relational Grammar which could explain the failure of unaccusative predicates to appear in impersonal passives.

The refutations of the Unaccusative Hypothesis and the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law do not demonstrate that Relational Grammar's proposed universal law of passive is wrong, merely that it is empirically empty. Part V argues, contrary to Perlmutter and Postal (1977) (A) that the particular way in which Relational Grammar has characterized passives should be avoided because of its use of dummies which deform categorial structure its conflation of distinct grammatical constructions, and its commitment to questionable underlying structures, and (B) that there is no reason to expect linguistic theory to characterize a universal rule of passive.

I. The Structure of German Impersonal Passives: Subjectlessness.

These passives have been called subjectless for good reason. In particular, there is no plausible candidate for subject in the sentence, so that there is no customary division of the sentence into subject noun phrase and predicate verb phrase.¹

In spite of the Relational Grammar analysis of impersonal passives, the es which appears in (1) is not the subject of (1). It is not a 'dummy' which was promoted from object position by the rule of passive.

- (1) Es wird gefeiert
It is celebrated

'Celebrations are under way.'

According to the account under attack the es is subject noun phrase and the sentence is of standard structure.²

But this es doesn't behave at all like a noun phrase. The rule of passive, which normally promotes noun phrases into subject position, is not responsible for the presence of es. Besides its clear uses as a pronoun, es is used in two distinct ways: on the one hand, as a pleonasm connected with daß-clauses (and in cleft sentences or as the 'weather pronoun',) and on the other hand as an empty stylistic variant. The first group is generally parallel to English it (in It is raining or It is clear that she knows) while the second is mirrored by English there (There comes a time when nothing seems to fit.)

The es in the first group of uses is a noun phrase or its pleonastic remnant. In particular, es is free to occur outside absolute initial position, as are all NPs in German clause structure.

- (2) Es regnete gestern
Gestern regnete es
Yesterday rained it
'Yesterday it rained.'
- (3) Uns scheint es allen komisch, daß P kommt.
Us (dat.) seems it all (dat.) funny, that P comes
'It seems funny to all of us that P is coming.'
- (4) Wir bedauern es alle, daß P kommt.
We regret it all, that P comes
'We all regret P's coming.'
- (5) Ihn { freut } es, daß P kommt
 { ärgert }
Him (acc.) { pleased } it that P comes
 { displeased }
'He is { pleased } that P is coming.'
 { displeased }
- (6) Jetzt friert es mich
Now freezes it me (acc.)
'I'm freezing now.'
- (7) Ihm gefällt es, daß P kommt.
him(d) please it that P comes
'It pleases him that P is coming.'
- (8) Heute gibt es Grund zur Sorge.
Today gives it reason for concern
'Today there is reason for concern.'

Opposed to these uses of es is the use of es as a stylistic particle, which is limited to absolute initial position in S. Note that this es fails to appear even in questions.

- (9) Es kam ein Ritter aus dem Osten
it came a knight from the east
'There came a knight from the east.'
- *Ein Ritter kam es aus dem Osten
A knight came it from the east
Ein Ritter kam aus dem Osten
A knight came from the east
- *Kam es ein Ritter aus dem Osten?
Came it a knight from the east

Kam ein Ritter aus dem Osten?

Came a knight from the east

'Did a knight come from the east?'

- (10) Es fielen mir zwei Eigentümlichkeiten auf
It fell me (da) 2 peculiarities on

'There struck me two peculiarities.'

*Mir fielen es zwei Eigentümlichkeiten auf
Me(da) fell it 2 peculiarities on

Mir fielen zwei Eigentümlichkeiten auf
Me(da) fell it 2 peculiarities on

'Two peculiarities struck me.'

Zwei Eigentümlichkeiten fielen mir auf
Me(da) fell it 2 peculiarities on

*Zwei Eigentümlichkeiten fielen es mir auf
Me(da) fell it 2 peculiarities on

*Fielen es dir die Eigentümlichkeiten auf?
Me(da) fell it 2 peculiarities on

Fielen dir die Eigentümlichkeiten auf?
Me(da) fell it 2 peculiarities on

The es which appears in German impersonal passives belongs to the group of empty stylistic particles. It can appear only in clause initial position, and thus is barred even from questions. (Noted by Curme (1922: 338).)

- (11) Es wurde ihm geholfen
It was him (dat.) helped

'He was helped.'

*Ihm wurde es geholfen
Him (dat.) was it helped

Ihm wurde geholfen
Him (dat.) was helped

*Wurde es ihm geholfen?
was it him helped?

Wurde ihm geholfen?
Was he helped?

- (12) Es wurde auf dem Marktplatz getanzt
It was on the market plaza danced

'People danced on the market plaza.'

*Auf dem Marktplatz wurde es getanzt³

On the plaza was it danced

Auf dem Marktplatz wurde getanzt

On the plaza was danced

'People danced on the market plaza.'

*Wurde es auf dem Marktplatz getanzt?

Was it on the market plaza danced?

Wurde auf dem Marktplatz getanzt?

Was on the market plaza danced?

(13) Es wurde dan geschlafen

It was then slept

'People slept then.'

*Dann wurde es geschlafen *Wurde es dann geschlafen?

Then was it slept Was it then slept

Dann wurde geschlafen Wurde dann geschlafen?

Then was slept Was then slept

'People slept then.' 'Did people sleep then?'

The first group of uses of es allow full nounphrases instead of es, although these are severely restricted in the case of the 'weather phrases'.

(2') Die Steine regneten auf die Polizei hinunter
The stones rained on the police down

'The stones rained down on the police.'

(3') Der Chef scheint uns allen komisch
The boss seems us (dat.) all (dat.) funny

'The boss seems funny to all of us.'

(4') Wir bedauern alle sein Versehen
We regret all his error

'We all regret his error.'

(5') Sein Erfolg freut uns
His success pleases us (dat.)

(6') Sein Blick friert mich
His look freezes me

'His look gives me a chill.'

(7') Sein Erfolg gefällt mir
His success pleases me

- (8') Sein Verhalten gibt Grund zur Sorge
His behavior gives reason for concern
'His behavior is reason for concern.'

No full noun phrases, even maximally vague ones, may be used in place of the stylistic particle es:

- (9') *Dies kam ein Ritter aus dem Osten
This came a knight from the east
- (10') *Dies fielen mir zwei Eigentümlichkeiten auf
This fell me (dat.) 2 peculiarities on

Nor may full noun phrases, even very vague ones, be used in place of the es which appears in impersonal passives.

- (11') *Dies wurde ihm geholfen
This was him (dat.) helped
- (12') *Dies wurde auf dem Marktplatz getanzt.⁴
This was on the market plaza danced
- (13') *Dies wurde dann geschlafen
This was then slept

As a third point of contrast, note that the es in the first group of uses may appear in embedded clauses, while those in the second group cannot.

- (2'') P weiß, daß es regnet
P knows, that it is raining
- (3'') P weiß, daß es uns allen komisch scheint, daß er kommt.
P knows that it us all funny seems, that he comes
'P knows that it seems funny to all of us that he is coming.'
- (4'') P weiß, daß wir es alle bedauern, daß er kommt.
P knows that we it all regret that he comes
'P knows that we all regret his coming.'
- (5'') P weiß, daß es M freut, daß er kommt.
P knows that it M pleases, that he comes
'P knows that it pleases M, that he is coming.'
- (6'') P weiß, daß es mich friert
P knows that it me freezes
'P knows that I'm freezing.'
- (7'') P weiß, daß es M gefällt, daß er kommt.
P knows that it M pleases that he comes
'P knows that it pleases M that he is coming.'

- (8'') P weiß, daß es Grund zur Sorge gibt.
P knows that it reason for concern gives
'P knows that there is reason for concern.'
- (9'') *P weiß, daß es ein Ritter aus dem Osten kam.
P knows that it a knight from the east came
- (10'') *P weiß, daß es mir zwei Eigentümlichkeiten auffielen.
P knows that it me 2 peculiarities on-fell

The es which appears in impersonal passives is likewise prohibited from appearance in embedded clauses. (Cf. Curme 1922:338).

- (11'') *P weiß, daß es ihm geholfen wurde.
P knows that it him helped was
- (12'') *P weiß, daß es auf dem Marktplatz getanzt wurde.
P knows that it on the market plaza danced was
- (13'') *P weiß, daß es dann geschlafen wurde.
P knows that it then slept was

The es which appears in impersonal passives is thus not a subject.⁵ It is a filler for any otherwise unfilled first positions in matrix clauses-- in impersonal passives as in the (9) and (10) sentences above. The presence of es provides no evidence that any dummy was promoted or ever existed.

There is furthermore no other likely candidate for subject in sight. One might suggest that dative objects such as ihm in the sentence below might be surface subjects, but this would concern only one of the many relevant structures found in impersonal passives.

- (14) Ihm wird geschmeichelt
he (dat.) AUX flatter (part.)
'He is flattered.'

There are, moreover, many sound reasons for refusing to view such a dative complement as subject. In particular, it has the wrong case marking and it doesn't control number agreement. Furthermore, as Cole et al. (1980: 727ff) note, such dative objects in passives display none of the subtler properties of subjects. They are subject to no EQUI rules, they do not delete under identity in conjunction reduction with subjects and cannot participate in the preposed relative clause construction. In this they contrast, point for point, with the notional accusative objects which are promoted by the standard rule of passive.

The argument thus far has taken the form that there is no plausible candidate for subject in the surface structure of impersonal passives. But there is also some positive indication that these sentences are subjectless.

It is because this construction has no subject that it fails to participate in any infinitival constructions:

- (15) *...ohne geschlafen zu werden.
without slept to be
*Er mu te stundenlang warten, ohne geholfen zu werden.
He must (past) for hours wait, without helped to be

Note, on contrast, the other constructions with es:

- (16) Es hat geblitzt und gedonnert, ohne zu regnen.
It has flashed and thundered, without to rain
'There was lightening and thunder without rain.'
- (17) Es fiel auf, ohne komisch zu scheinen, daß er zugegen war.
It fell on without funny to seem, that he present was
'It was striking, although it didn't seem peculiar, that he was present.'
- (18) es isn't a subject in (4)
- (19) Es überrascht mich, ohne mich zu freuen, da sie kommt.
It surprises me, without me to please, that is he comes
'It surprises but doesn't please me that she is coming.'
- (20) Ihr Blick kann mich nicht streifen, ohne mich zu frieren.
Her glance can me not light on, without me to freeze/chill
'Her glance cannot light upon me without chilling me.'
- (21) Es fiel ihr zuf, ohne ihr zu gefallen.
It fell her on, without her to please
'It struck her without pleasing her.'
- (22) Sein Benehmen fällt auf, ohne Grund zur Sorge zu geben.
His behavior falls on without reason for concern to give
'His behavior is noticeable, although there is no reason for concern.'

In the present (categorical grammar) framework, these infinitival constructions are derived from verb phrases. (In standard theory, one might have regarded them as derived from sentences with empty subject nodes, which would then be bound pragmatically. Since there are no subject nodes in impersonal passives, this would explain why impersonal passives cannot be used in these infinitivals.)

Those who promote the dummy analysis of impersonal passives would perhaps like to attribute this failure of impersonal passives to participate in the infinitival construction to a failure of control in the infinitive. This attribution fails (a) because one ought to be able to effect control from dummy to dummy, but cannot:

- (23) *Es wurde tagelang gefeiert, ohne geschlafen zu werden.
It was for days celebrated, without slept to be

and (b) because syntactic control isn't absolutely required in infinitival complements of the relevant sort. Thus impersonal passives and agentless constructions can appear in the matrix of these constructions.

- (24) Dann wurde gegessen, ohne ihn zu fragen.
Then was eaten, without him to ask
'Then people ate without asking him.'
- (25) Es regnete tagelang, ohne uns zu stören.
It rained for days, without us to bother
'It rained for days without bothering us.'

The suggestion that the dummies inserted in the Relational Grammar treatment are "non-referential" might be made in order to explain why the infinitivals above allow no control, since non-referentials certainly cannot be coreferential. I am suspicious of this explanation, however. The dummies are assigned the status of noun phrases, which, in systematic treatments, are all to be semantically interpreted in a unified fashion. (This interpretation is usually a set of properties, i.e. a quantifier.) But then dummies cannot be simply non-referential, although they may be assigned a "distinguished variable" as semantic value which guarantees that they do not satisfy that predicates. In this case, however, some control, whether grammatical or pragmatic, ought to be possible in those constructions where other noun phrases exhibit control. As the examples above indicate, no such cases have been forthcoming.

This is not to suggest that the problem is insoluble or even that we are always forced to treat dummies either as referential or as syncategorematic. We could also specify in the rule assigning control that the meanings of dummies may not be assigned as control. But this would be a suspicious restriction, especially given the lack of NP properties of the dummies in question here. Dummies which enjoy NP status with none of the semantic responsibilities of reference are in violation of the hypothesis that categorial structure in syntax is parallel to argument structure in semantics.

In the present analysis, impersonal passives are simply categorially wrong for the infinitival construction. This follows from a treatment of impersonal passives as constructions which automatically lack subjects, if we suppose that the infinitivals are derived from verb phrases with verb phrase meanings (which might be regarded as sentences with empty subject nodes, where the argument position of the VP meaning is supplied contextually.) Impersonal passives have the syntactic make-up of verb phrases, but they are sentences categorially and have sentence meanings with no empty argument position.⁶

There are undoubtedly mechanisms one could deploy to let impersonal passives mimic subjectlessness while retaining a "dummy" subject. These ought to be specified prior to further discussion.

A further argument for the subjectlessness of impersonal passives is available if one is willing to examine idiolects. Some (few) native speakers accept passives in the complements of verbs of perception:

- (26) Sie sah ihn verprügelt werden.
she saw him beaten AUX
'She saw him being beaten.'

But impersonal passives are never found in these constructions.

- (27) *Sie sah getanzt werden.
She saw danced AUX

This follows again from the conception of impersonal passives as phrases with sentence meanings if we assume that verbs of perception in this idiolect, at least, take VP complements with standard VP meanings. Impersonal passives simply are not VP complements with VP meanings. If there is no subject in German impersonal passives, then it is a genuinely impersonal construction, i.e. a subjectless one.

As such, the construction stands nearly alone in German, though certainly not in the family of languages. There are two similar constructions in German, one involving the verbs dürsten and hungern, exemplified below:

- (28) Mich { $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{dürstet} \\ \text{hungert} \end{array} \right\}$ nach Abenteuer
me (acc.) { $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{thirst} \\ \text{hungers} \end{array} \right\}$ after adventure
'I { $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{thirst} \\ \text{hunger} \end{array} \right\}$ after adventure.'

This construction is decidedly non-colloquial, though not archaic. It is similar to the impersonal passives in lacking a subject, but the subcategorization is completely different. Here we see S = (nach NP) + Ac NP + VP_{imp}, while in the impersonal passives S = (Obl. NP) + (PP) + Past Part + Pass Aux.

The other is found in the idiom:

- (29) Mir liegt an der Sache.
Me (dat) lies on the matter
'The matter is important to me.'

This is an example of S = Obl. NP + PP + V_{imp}, but both the oblique NP and the PP are obligatory. There are no basic structures S = Obl. NP + V or S = PP + V or S = V in German, although the outputs of the rule admitting impersonal passives may take these forms. (Thus this rule is not structure preserving in the sense of Emonds (1976:3).)

The rule creating impersonal passives will now be specified. To formulate the rule, let 'I' designate a two place relation between individuals and states of affairs, i.e. sets of possible worlds, such that 'I(x)(p)' is true iff the individual represented by 'x' intends that the state of affairs represented by 'p' came about.

For α a V which does not take an accusative complement, we may assume without loss of generality that α is of categorial structure S/NP/X, then PASS(α) is past participle (α) + werden and is of categorial structure S/X. The meaning of PASS (α) is specified, depending on α 's syntactic category:

- (30) i. if $\alpha \in VP$, $\text{PASS}(\alpha)' = \exists x \alpha'(x) \wedge \exists x I(x)(\alpha'(x))$
ii. if $\alpha \in TVP$, $\text{PASS}(\alpha)' = \lambda x \exists y \alpha'(x)(y) \wedge \exists y I(y)(\exists x \alpha'(x)(y))$
iii. if $\alpha \in VP/PP$, $\text{PASS}(\alpha)' = \lambda p \exists x \alpha'(P)(x) \wedge \exists x I(x)(\exists P \alpha'(P)(x))$,
where P is variable over prepositional phrase meanings.

Passivization with agent phrases (for those idiolects which accept them) will be treated by parallel rules. Note that the condition on intentionality specifies only that someone could intend the action, not that the actual person who completed the action intended it.

This is correct, as is evidenced by one of the Badische Zeitung's editorials of October, 1981:

- (31) "Auto-Freiheit. Und dafür ist es [das Volk] auch gerne bereit zu zahlen. Mit abgeholzten Wäldern, mit stinkender Luft und einem verbogenen Rückgrat. Weil das natürlich auch Freiheit ist.
(Ganz nebenbei: Es wird auch gestorben für diese Freiheit.)"
 incidentally Aux also die (part) for this freedom
'Incidentally: people die for this freedom.'

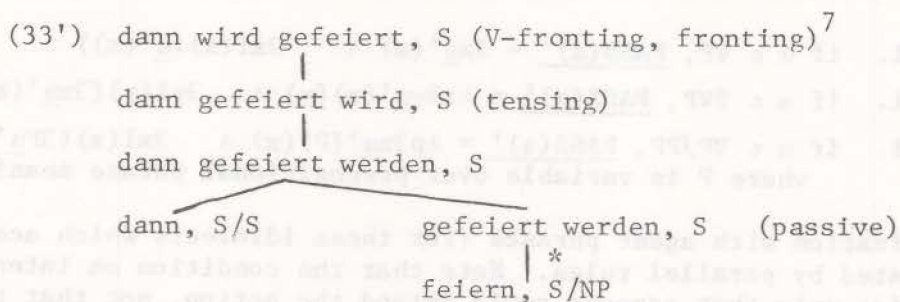
The people spoken of in this sentence do not die willingly. Rather, they, and in so doing, do what might be done willingly. The sentence thus strongly suggests that they, and others, are responsible. Curme's phrase, that the initiators of the action act as "free moral agents", is really quite good. (There are more complicated cases as well, in which it is suggested that those performing the action do so according to someone else's intention.

- (32) Da wurde sich anständig benommen.
 there AUX self politely behave (part)
'There people had to behave.'

This may very well be a realization of the same deontic component of meaning which allows the impersonal passive to function as an imperative.)

There are several further aspects of this rule which I call attention to here without justifying. The rule assumes canonical SOV word order. It operates on lexical verbs, creating a constituent Pass. Part. + werden. The rule says nothing about the predominance of durative (i.e. atelic) predicates in the impersonal passive. Finally, the rule does not output phrases of the category VP which require subjects. The structure of a sentence such as (33) is given in (33'):

- (33) Dann wird gefeiert.
 then AUX celebrate (pass. part.)
'Then people celebrate.'



We are concerned only with the step in the derivation marked with the asterisk. The output, gefeiert werden, has sentence status. It thus can function as a sentential complement (e.g. with scheinen), but never in a VP complement with verbs of perception or in the infinitival construction with ohne, which is likewise constructed from verb phrases.

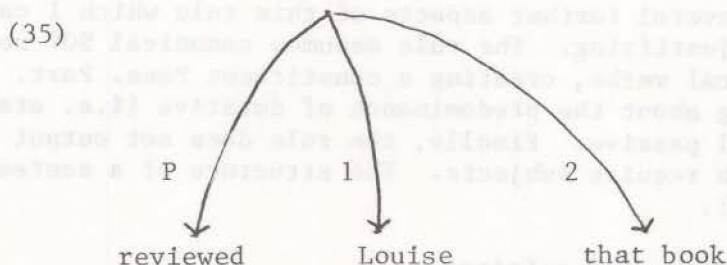
The situation with verbs taking oblique complements or prepositional phrase complements is exactly parallel, except that these complements must first be added to the passivized verbs to derive sentences. But at no stage of the derivation of impersonal passives with these verbs do we encounter phrases of the category S/NP_{nom}, i.e. verb phrases.

II. A Treatment in Relational Grammar

The analysis proposes that clauses be described at two levels. At an underlying level, the structure of the minimal clause includes a predicate (P) and a number of noun phrases ("terms") and a specification of the grammatical relations which each term bears to the verb, e.g. 'subject' (1), 'direct object' (2), 'indirect object' (3), 'oblique object' (00), etc. At a level closer to the surface, these may have changed or have been augmented by rules collapsing clauses. Perlmutter and Postal (1977) consider the following sentences, which have identical underlying grammatical relations:

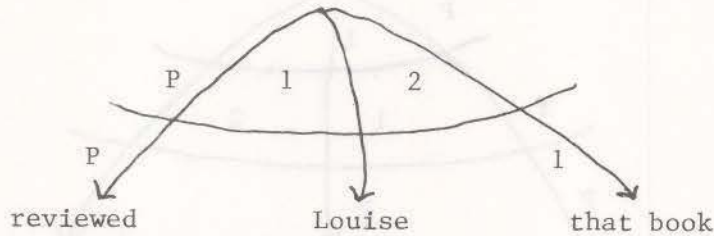
- (34) a. Louise reviewed that book.
 b. That book was reviewed by Louise.

The underlying structure may be represented in a 'Relational Network' as in (35).



For points relevant to this discussion, this network is a sufficient description of the relational structure of (34a). (34b) has a differing surface configuration of relations, however, which require some extension of the figure.

(36)



The new figure has relabeled the arrow ("arc") to that book as a 1-arc, announcing that it is the subject. The relabeling is licensed by the universal rule of passive. Passive is universally defined, as 'advancing' or 'promoting' the 2 to a 1, in a clause which already contains a 1.

The line separating the '2' from the '1' on this arc signifies a division of "strata", a concept which Relational Grammarians have introduced, but which may be clarified to generative grammarians easily. Stratum (n+1) may appear below stratum (n), if and only if this is licensed by a rule of grammar; just as the second stratum in diagram (36) is licensed by the rule of passive. Strata are thus analogous to lines in derivations: line (n+1) may appear below line (n) if, and only if this is licensed by a rule of grammar.⁸ There is a difference in the Relational Grammar view, however. While earlier generative grammarians never attributed theoretical importance to the structure of derivations, the concept of 'line in a derivation' or 'stratum' is important in Relational Grammar.

This becomes obvious when we ask which grammatical relation Louise bears after the application of the passive, i.e. in (34b). That it is no longer the subject is guaranteed by the Stratal Uniqueness Law (Perlmutter and Postal 1977:408): "Only one dependent of a clause can bear a given term relation in a given stratum." This is novel significance for the line in derivations. Figures which like (36) include indication of strata are "stratal diagrams". The actual grammatical status of the initial subject is specified by the Chômeur Condition: if a term N_a in a stratum S_1 bears a given relation and another term N_b bears the same relation in S_{i+1} , then N_a bears the Chômeur relation in stratum S_{i+1} (paraphrasing Perlmutter and Postal 1977:408). A chômeur of a term which previously bore the 1 relation is signified 1, a 2-chômeur is $\hat{2}$, etc.

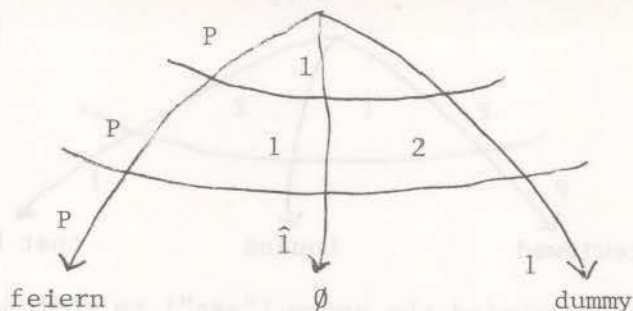
One further proposed relational law will be relevant below. Perlmutter (1978:156) refers to the Motivated Chomage Law which he characterizes as violated by the analysis of impersonal passives as "spontaneous demotion" of subjects. Impersonal passives are those without (surface) subjects, such as the following example from German:

- (37) Gestern wurde gefeiert/Es wurde gestern gefeiert.
 Yesterday was celebrated
 'There was celebrating yesterday.'

Even though no surface 1 may be found in these constructions, the universal rule of passive would have it that they, too, are examples of 2 to 1. The justification of this will occupy us below.

Perlmutter (1978) suggests that impersonal passives such as the one above contain a dummy object prior to the application of the passive rule. The dummy is advanced to subject position by the same rule of passive demonstrated in figure (36) above. An appropriate network for an impersonal passive would then be (38):

(38)



The relabeling of 2 to 1 is sanctioned by the passive rule and the consequent relabeling of 1 to $\hat{1}$ is required by the Chômeur condition.

Perlmutter claims one advantage for his analysis, namely, that it can predict which predicates may appear in impersonal passive constructions. The "Unaccusative Hypothesis" divides verbs which have only one NP complement (in English, intransitives) into two classes: those which have only underlying subjects "unergatives" and those which have only underlying objects "unaccusatives". The underlying objects of unaccusatives must be advanced to subject position by a 2-to-1 (non-passive) advancement rule, known as "Unaccusative Advancement". Because of the 1-advancement Exclusiveness Law, no other advancement to 1 is possible in this clause, in particular no passives (Perlmutter 1978:166). Thus the prediction: initially unaccusative clauses may never appear in impersonal passives.

Unaccusatives are recognized primarily by their membership in the class of semantic predicates which excludes those describing willed acts and those describing involuntary bodily processes such as coughing. The excluded class forms the "unergative" group, according to Perlmutter (1978). The prediction: all the verbs in impersonal passives are unergative predicates and have the meanings associated with these.⁹ This prediction is correct for German (as reflected in my formulation of the rule above.)

There are then two hypotheses about the meaning of impersonal passives (in German). According to the unaccusative hypothesis, verbs which describe acts which might be willed may be selected to appear in the impersonal passive. The rule of passive does not change meaning. According to the alternative proposed here, it is a part of the meaning of the construction that the act it describes might be willed. Since this alternative treats the phenomenon semantically, we might refer to it as 'the semantic hypothesis.' In contrast, the unaccusative hypothesis is syntactic. The rule of passive may not apply to syntactic structures of a certain sort.

Even as alike as they are, the two hypotheses still do not make completely identical predictions. According to the semantic hypothesis, a verb which describes an act which cannot normally be willed might still appear in the impersonal passive construction, although this will be rare, and may sound implausible in many contexts. The syntactic hypothesis cannot explain this possibility except as a case of homonymy.

Curme (1922:338) discusses one such case in which the verbs verbluten 'to bleed to death' and sterben 'to die' appear felicitously in the impersonal passive. The semantic hypothesis accommodates this possibility straightforwardly--a situation is described in which such acts are willed. The syntactic hypothesis must resort to homonymy--the postulation that there are two verbs verbluten, one which means 'willingly bleed to death' and another 'bleed to death in an unwilling fashion.' Since Curme's example suggests that there may be a number of similar homonyms, the syntactic hypothesis becomes somewhat messy, (but by no means untenable.)

I believe that this difference in the treatment of the implicature of volitionality and the issue of subjectlessness are the only empirical distinctions between the two treatments, although methodological differences abound. (Cf. part V.A below). Both the evidence on the subjectlessness of impersonal passives and the evidence that there is no clearly defined class of unergative verbs favor the categorial approach advocated here.

The appeal of the Relational Grammar treatment is not based on the facts of German, but rather on the circumstance that it makes predictions about passive rules in all languages. The relational laws and hypotheses described above are intended to hold for all languages. I would not suppose the rules formulated in the categorial treatment above to hold for all languages, but only that the reference to categories is universally employed. This is an unsurprising claim.

Relational Grammar makes the following surprisingly strong claims: (i) No unaccusative predicate is ever found in an impersonal passive in any language; (ii) No language contains sentences in which two advancements to 1 have taken place.

These claims are strong because they may be tested, and potentially falsified on the grounds of data from any language. For this reason the claims are intriguing and worthy of attention.

Let me clarify my position: if we were to judge the Relational Grammar analysis on the basis of the facts of German alone, I am certain we should regard it as inferior. A great deal of theoretical apparatus generates very few concrete predictions. But we are to judge it not on the basis of one language, but rather on the basis of all languages, for which it makes identical predictions. If these claims are verified, then the unattractive analysis of German would be a small price to pay for an impressive set of universal laws in language. For this reason I propose to turn to the question of the universal validity of the unaccusative hypothesis and the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law.

III. The Unaccusative Hypothesis

III.A. Lithuanian¹⁰

The Lithuanian passive is formed by combining the present passive participle in -m- or the past participle in -t- with forms of the auxiliary būti 'to be' in any tense. The participle normally agrees in gender and number with the superficial subject of the passive sentence, if there is any. The passive superficial subject usually corresponds to an accusative object in an active counterpart, but may correspond to an oblique object. It is clearly 2 → 1 advancement in the sense of Relational Grammar.

(39) jìs (yrà) myli - m - as
be(nom.) be(3s) love(pres. pass.) (masc. nom. s.)

'He is loved.'

(40) jì (yrà) myli-m- a
she is love(pres. pass.) (fem. nom. s.)

'She is loved.'

(Hyphens have been employed above to show the morphological structure of the participles. There are no hyphens in normal orthography.) The verb 'to be' has been placed in parentheses for this form may be omitted in

the present tense.

Impersonal passives are formed from verbs without accusative objects, including intransitives (Geniušienė (1974:210).)

- (41) (jono) išėita iš kiemo
(Jonas(gen.)) go out(past. part.)(n) from courtyard
'Someone has gone out of the courtyard.'
('Jonas has gone out of the courtyard.')

But they are also formed from transitive verbs with direct objects, which means that some sentences have two passives:

- (42) Namo ne - pastatė
house (gen.) not build(past 3s)
'They didn't build a house.'

- (43) Namas ne-pastatytas
house(nom.) not build(past. pass.)(nom.s.)
'The house has not been built.'

- (44) Namo ne- pastatyta
house(gen.) not build(past. pass.)(n)
'A house has not been built.'

(The latter, impersonal passive corresponds to the indefinite reading of the noun phrase in the active.) The impersonal passive is formed from the same participial desinences as personal passives (although the participles always show neuter endings in impersonal passives), which are combined with buti just as are the participles personal passives. It is clear that we are dealing with impersonal passives.

Perlmutter (1978:162) provides a list of the semantic predicates which should universally be absent from impersonal passives because they are unaccusatives. The following is a selection from his list:

"Predicates determining initially unaccusative clauses

- (45) a. Predicates expressed by adjectives in English.
This is a very large class, including predicates describing sizes, ..., smells, states of mind, etc."

re: states of mind (Senn 1977:377)

- (46) jõ ēsama gēro žmogaūs
he(gen.) be(pres. pass.)(n) good(gen.) man (gen.)
'He is a good man.'

jõ appears in the genitive because this is the regular case for agentives (underlying subjects) to assume in passives. gēro žmogaūs is genitive because it is in predicative construction with jõ.

re: sizes

- (47) jō ēsama aukštó, dideló
he(gen.) be(pres. pass.) tell(gen.), tall(gen.)
'He is tall.'

re: smells

- (48) ?kvepta blogai
small(past. pass.)(n) bad(adv.)
'It smelled bad.'
- (49) skambeta blogai
sound(past. pass.)(n) bad(adv.)

Perlmutter (1978:163) warns that his list of predicates cannot be used in the sense of "best glosses" of verbs in other languages. So we must take care that we do not misconstrue the intended sense of the predicates listed. The predicates must at the very least not be understood as describing willed or volitional acts or involuntary bodily processes. None of the above examples involve errors of this type, however.¹¹

- (45) "b. Predicates whose initial nuclear term is semantically a patient. burn,...,lie(involuntarily), ..., die, disappear, etc." (Perlmutter 1978:162-3).

- (50) degama
burn(intr.)(pres. pass.)(n)
'Things burn.'

- (51) búvo mirštama
be(past 3) die (pres. pass.)(n)
'People would die (sometimes).'

- (52) cia pranykstama
here disappear(pres. pass.)(n)
'People disappear here.'

Normally, both personal and impersonal passives are understood as involving a person or persons in the position of underlying subject (Geniūstienė (1976:145) and Geniūšienė (1974:207).) This explains the translation of the last example. The tendency to understand passives this way is not absolute. Cf. the examples above but also (Geniūšienė (1976:145).):

- (53) Taigoje bundama anksti
taiga(loc.) wake(pres. pass.)(n) early
'In the taiga they wake up early.'

where the animals of the taiga are meant. Note as well however the following examples of impersonal passives of verbs describing natural events (Geniūšienė (1974:212).):

- (54) Pasnigta
snow(past pass.)(n)
'Snow has fallen.'
- (55) Palyta
rain(past pass.)(n)
'It has rained.'

There is some semantic differentiation between these and the corresponding actives. Geniušienė (1974:212) suggests that these are used when the results of the events continue to be evident. The native speaker respondent I interviewed concentrated on the "modus relativus" sense of passives and felt that the passive emphasized that it was surprising that there had been precipitation. There is no indication of volition, however.

Some further examples showing the irrelevance of volition in the underlying subject are worth noting:

- (56) Ir pamiršom visi
and forget(past)(1 pl.) all
'And we've all forgotten.'
- (57) kur mūs gimta, kur augta
where we(gen.) be born (past pass.)(n) where grow up (past pass.)
'Where we were born, where we grew up'

The intransitive verbs 'be born' and 'grow up' are clearly not volitional. Similarly, Geniušienė (1974:211) reports of impersonal passives with the following verbs: persalti 'to catch cold', gulėti 'to lie (involuntarily)' and sentis 'to grow old'.

The predicates expressed in impersonal passives may also be states rather than acts. Thus:

- (58) jō gyvėnta šitame kambaryjė (Senn 1966:377)
he(gen.) live(past pass.) this(loc.) room(loc.)
'He lived in this room.'
- (59) norima dirbti (Geniušienė 1976:141)
want(pres. pass.)(n) work(imp.)
'People want to work.'

Cf. as well the examples (46) and (47) above. The predicates expressed may also be non-volitional states as in the case of galėti + inf. 'to be able' and tuerti - inf. 'to be obliged (Geniušienė 1974:219).

- (60) turima rimtai ruoštis egzaminui
ought(pres.pass.) seriously prepare exam(dat.)

gālima 'to be able (pres. pass.)' and negālima, its negation, are also cited in Senn (1966:376).

- (45) c. "Predicates of existing and happening. (Perlmutter
...end up..." 1978:163)
- (61) jò pasiródyta tìkro dīdvyrìo
he(gen.) turn out(past pass.)(n) real(gen.) hero(gen.)
'He turned out to be a real hero.'
- (45) d. "Non-voluntary emission of stimuli that impinge on
the senses (light, noise, smell, etc.)"
(Perlmutter 1978:163).

Cf. examples (48) and (49) above.

- (45) e. "Aspectual predicates
begin, start, stop..." (Perlmutter 1978:163)

- (62) pradedama domėtis muzika
begin(pres. pass.) be interested (inf.) music(inst.)
'Some are beginning to be interested in music.'
(Geniusienė 1974:163)

- (63) { imama } ruoštis egzaminui
 { baigta }
 { start(pres. pass.) } prepare(inf.) exam(dat.)
 { finish(past pass.) }
'They are starting to prepare for the exam.'
'They have finished preparing for the exam.'

The discussion above should not be taken to indicate that the passive in Lithuanian is possible with every verb. As Geniusienė (1974:207) points out, it is impossible with most subjectless verbs and all verbs denoting predicates whose first arguments are obligatorily non-human. To this may be added idioms and verbs expressing logical relations (such as 'correspond to') or measurements (e.g. 'weigh'). These restrictions extend to impersonal passives.

But the unaccusative hypothesis predicts a particular pattern of exceptions in impersonal passives which is not found in Lithuanian. Before discussing possible modifications of the unaccusative hypothesis, I turn to Irish for further evidence.

III.B. The Irish Autonomous Form

Perlmutter and Postal (ms.:48-49) treat the Irish autonomous form as an impersonal passive, i.e. an example of 2 → 1 advancement. There is no motivation in Irish surface syntax for this treatment, since nominals with 1 status never occur in these constructions.

- (64) Bhuailleadh go tobann é
strike(aut.) suddenly him(acc.)
'He was suddenly struck.'

The pronoun é which appears as subject in the translation is the object in the Irish sentence. It is marked as object by its non-subject form (sé, nom., would be impossible) and by its position separated from the

verb (where nominatives do not occur.) McCloskey (1979:141) further notes that nominals in this position are subject to oblique relativization--unlike nominatives. In relational terms, it would seem that this construction would best be described as $1 \rightarrow \hat{1}$, i.e. the underlying subject simply is not expressed. This, indeed, is the analysis proposed by Comrie (1977) for the cognate construction in Welsh.

Perlmutter (1978:157) claims that no such "spontaneous demotion" may be countenanced in any language. This is his motivation for analyzing the Irish autonomous form as uniform $2 \rightarrow 1$ advancement of dummy. The predictions of the analysis are exactly as in Lithuanian: no unaccusative predicate may appear in the construction.

Some counterexamples to these predictions (the letters 'a' etc. refer to Perlmutter's 1978:162-3 cateogires quoted above, III.A):

- a. (65) Táthar briste (Stenson 1981:154)
be(aut.) broken
'Things are broken.'
- (66) Táthar sásta (Siadhail 198
be(aut.) satisfied
'People are satisfied.'
- (67) Ní bhítear buioch dom (Dillon & Cróinín 1961:112)
not be(past aut.) grateful to me
'People were not grateful to me.'
- b. (68) cionnas táthar agat? (Lloyd 1904:56)
how be(aut.) at you
'How are things with you?'
- (69) caithfear a bheith cúramach (Stenson 1981:146)
must(aut.) at be(ger.) careful
'One must be careful.'
- (45) f. Duratives (Perlmutter 1978:163)
...stay..."
- (70) d'fhantaí sa mhaile nios minice an t-am sin (Stenson
(past)stay(aut.) at home more often the time that 1981:146)
'One stayed home more often then.'

(Cf. Vendryes (1956, especially 194-5) for further examples in Old Irish, including examples expressing the predicates 'to come of age', 'to come to one's last hour' on p. 194 and 'to be king', '...innkeeper', '...melodious' on p. 195.)

The examples from Irish are valuable not merely for their further refutation of the unaccusative hypothesis but also because (i) they include examples from Perlmutter's class (f), "duratives", which were not found in Lithuanian and (ii) they haven't the same tendency as the Lithuanian examples to be understood personally.

III.C. Estonian Impersonals

Like the Irish autonomous form, Estonian impersonals lack superficial subjects, and show identical marking on objects in both active and passive. Also like the Irish forms, they are not limited to describing volitional acts and involuntary bodily processes. Below is a sample of forms in this construction. 'a' etc. refer again to Perlmutter's classes introduced in III.A above.

- a. (71) Lapimaal ollakse alati näljas
Lapland(all) be(imp.) always hungry(iness)
'One is always hungry in Lapland.'

The predicates expressing good (well-behaved), despressed, and be in a bad mood also appear in the impersonal construction.

- b. (72) Siis elati kauem
then live(imp.)(pret.) longer
'People lived longer then.'

Similarly, we find impersonals with the meanings die, be born (intrans.), burn, disappear and be able.

- c. (73) Ollakse, aga ei teata, miks
be(imp.) but not know(imp.) why
'People exist, but don't know why.'

Both the stative know and the verb of existence (also stative) be appear impersonally. End up in trouble may also be expressed impersonally.

- d. (74) selles linnaosas haisetakse
this(iness) city-part(iness) stink(imp.)
'It stinks in that part of town.'

- (75) Suvel nähakse parem välja
summer(all) see (imp.) better away
'People look better in the summer.'

- e. (76) Selle vastu hakatakse huvi tundma
this(gen.) against begin(imp.) interest(nom.) know(ma-infinitive)
'People are beginning to get interested in this.'

- f. (77) Selles ametis ei püsita kana
this(iness) job(iness) not last(imp.) long
'People don't last long in this job.'

Survive and stay are also used impersonally.

The examples above are taken from an initial two-page questionnaire and so don't represent the fruits of a thorough search. They are included here to provide a broader range of data to those who might be interested

in reanalysis. The Estonian impersonal is a superficially distinct sort of construction from the Lithuanian passive, the source of most of the other counterevidence.

If the evidence from German and Lithuanian were viewed alone, one might wish to entertain a form of the unaccusative hypothesis in which duratives and predicates taking non-human arguments were unaccusative cross-linguistically. But the Irish examples (70) and (68) refute this formulation. (In fact, we also saw some examples of predicates taking only non-human arguments in the Lithuanian examples; the constructions only tend to be understood as about humans.) The Estonian examples refute the proposed revision as well.

Counterexamples for all of the supposed characteristics of unaccusatives have been adduced from only three languages. This does not demonstrate that there is no class of unaccusative predicates--a proposition which cannot be empirically demonstrated--, but only that none has been shown to exist. The range of counterexamples does suggest, however, that even if a class of unaccusative predicates might successfully be delineated, so that one could predict the ill-formedness of some impersonal passives universally, that class of predicates would be so small and heterogeneous as to have little explanatory value.

Perlmutter (1978:161) has actually anticipated this refutation of the unaccusative hypothesis, and has indicated his reaction, which would be to retreat to a weaker version of the unaccusative hypothesis, one in which (Perlmutter:1978:161)

"Initial unaccusativity vs. unergativity varies from language to language. There is no way to predict which clauses in a given language will be initially unergative and which initially unaccusative."

This is more than a weakening of the unaccusative hypothesis; it amounts to a near abandonment. For suppose it were adopted. The empirical import of the hypothesis is then that some exceptions to the rule of formation for impersonal passives form a syntactic class. There is no further constraint on deciding what is unaccusative. But it is completely uninteresting to say that a part of a group of objects forms a class in some sense. What is required is a characterization, not an assertion of existence.

IV. The 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law

The claim that some exceptions to impersonal passivization are predictable rests not only on a characterization of unaccusative predicates, but also on the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law. Unaccusative verbs are to be excluded from impersonal passivization because they already obligatorily require advancement to 1 which is not passive. This advancement to 1 bars the unaccusative from passivization.

Evidence is adduced in the present section that there is no 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law. This means that even if unaccusatives could successfully be characterized, there would be no explanation for their failure to undergo passivization within the theory of Relational Grammar. (We should also note that, if it turns out that the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law is invalid, this sufficiently explains the unaccusative predicates found in impersonal passives in III. Some version of the Unaccusative Hypothesis might then still hold.

In demonstrating below that some sentences involve multiple advancements to 1, I will proceed from Perlmutter and Postal's (1977:412-3) characterization of four types of passives.

(78) a. Plain Personal Passives

Solche Sachen werden nicht gesagt
'Such things aren't said.'

b. Reflexive Personal Passives

Solche Sachen sagen sich nicht
'Such things aren't said.'

c. Plain Impersonal Passives

Es wird hier getanzt
'Dancing takes place here.'

d. Reflexive Impersonal Passives

Es tanzt sich gut hier
'One dances well here.'

We shall especially be concerned with type (78b), reflexive medio-passives. I take it to be crucial here that the sentence in (b) have a medio-passive meaning and not a reflexive one even though it is marked reflexively. I.e. one does not understand (b) to be about things which say themselves, but rather which are said.

IV.A. German

Reflexive medio-passives and impersonal passives do interact.

(79) a. Sie versammeln ihre Sachen
they gather their things

b. Sie versammeln sich
they gather self
they
'They gather', not 'They gather themselves', but
'Something or someone gathers them.'

c. Jetzt wird sich versammelt¹²
now AUX self gather(part.)
'People should now gather.'

(80) a. Er erinnerte sie ans Geld
he reminded her of money

'He reminded her about the money.'

b. Sie erinnerte sich ans Geld
she reminded self of money
'She remembered the money', not (necessarily) 'She reminded herself.' but 'Something reminded her.'

- (80) c. Jetzt wird sich ans Geld erinnert
 now AUX self of money reminded
 'People should now remember the money!'

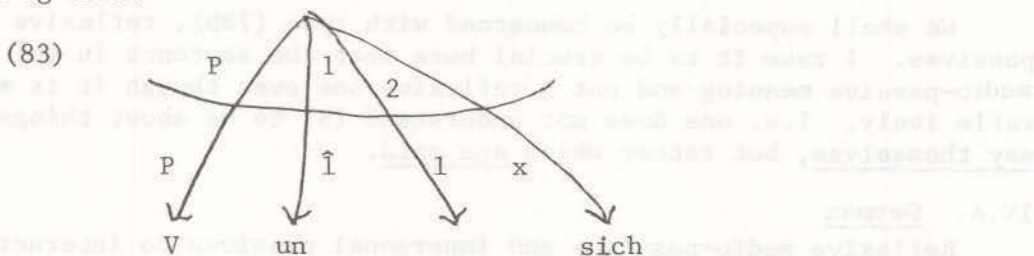
Wackernagel (1926:147) cites another example. From ärgern 'to annoy', is formed sich ärgern, 'to be annoyed' not 'to annoy oneself'. This forms an impersonal passive:

- (81) nun wird sich wo anders geärgert
 now AUX self where other annoy(part.)
 'Now people can get annoyed someplace else.'

To derive the above sentences, we need a rule of 2 → 1 advancement such as the following:

- (82) for $\alpha \in TV$, sich $\alpha \in IV$ where $\forall x \text{ Sich}_\alpha'(x)$ iff $\exists y \alpha'(x)(y)$ where x, y range over NP meanings

In a relational framework, the rule would have to admit networks of the following sort:



where x specifies the grammatical relation of sich in the b sentences. (In surface syntax, this is a 2 in all the examples cited, but other possibilities exist.)

IV.B. Lithuanian

Lithuanian, like German, has reflexive medio-passives, but these are marked not by reflexive pronouns, but by the affix -s(i)-, which appears word finally in unprefixed verbs and between prefix and stem in the case of prefixed verbs. (-s(i)- is not restricted to medio-passive meaning, just as German reflexivization is not.)

- (84) skolinti, 'to lend (x to y)'
skolinti-s, 'to borrow (x)(imperfective);, i.e. not 'to lend oneself(x)', but rather 'to be a y such that there is a z who lends x to y.'
pa-si-skolinti, 'to borrow (perfective)'

In this case we see an advancement to 1 from the position of the notional indirect object, the recipient of the loan. This should preclude passivization, but passives are formed:

- (85) buvo skolinamasi; skolintasi
be(past) borrow(pres. pass.)(n.); (past pass.)(n)
'People were borrowing; People had borrowed.'

Passives may be formed from the prefixed perfective as well. My respondent assures me that these passives may be used impersonally quite freely. Further examples are much easier to find here than in German.

- (86) itikinti, 'to convince'
i-si-tikinti, 'to be convinced', i.e. not 'to convince oneself.'

- (87) (Mokslininku) buvo isitikinta
scholars(gen.) be(past) become convinced (past pass.)(n)
kad...
that
'People (scholars) were convinced that...'
(Geniušienė (1974:210))

- (88) linksminti, 'to delight, please'
linksmintis 'to be delighted (intr.)', i.e. not 'to delight oneself.'

Geniušienė (1974:211) asserts that impersonal passives are formed from this verb.

- (89) jaudėti 'to excite', jaudėtis 'to get excited', i.e. not 'to excite oneself' and the impersonal passive:

nemažai tada buvo jaudintasi
not-little then be(past) get excited (past pass.)(n.)

'People became more than a little excited then.'
(Geniušienė (1976:142))

- (90) priminti 'to remind', primintis 'to remember', i.e. not 'to remind oneself' and the (personal) passive:

susrinkime buvo prisiminti
meeting(loc) be(past) remember(past pass.)(nom. pl.)

ir seni darbininkai
also old workers(nom.)

'The old workers were remembered at the meeting as well.'
'One was reminded about the old workers at the meeting as well.'

The example is from Geniušienė (1976:142). It is particularly important because it would stand as a counterexample to the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law even if the analysis of impersonal passives as 2 → 1 advancement were abandoned. Some further (impersonal) examples:

- (91) kelti 'to raise' forms keltis, posikelti 'to rise', i.e. not (necessarily) to 'raise oneself.' This may be found in impersonal passives:

buvo posikelta
be(past) rise(past pass.)(n)

'They rose', 'Some people rose.'

- (92) užkabinti 'to hook, hand' forms užsikabinti 'to get hooked, hanged', which is found in passives:

buvo užsikabinta
be(past) get caught(past pass.)(n)

'Things got caught', 'There were snags.'

- (93) skirti 'to separate, choose' forms skirtis 'to become separate', i.e. not 'to separate oneself.' This is found in impersonal passives:

buvo skirtas
be(past) become separate(past pass.)(n)

'They got separated.'

IV.C. Irish

In addition to the autonomous form, Irish has a genuine passive as well.

- (94) bualann sé an gadhar
strike he(nom) the dog(obj)

'He strikes the dog.'

- (95) Tá an gadhar buailte aige
is the dog(nom) strike(past) at-him

'The dog has been struck by him.'

The underlying object is clearly marked as subject in the passive both by verb agreement:

- (96) táimid buailte aige
be(1-pl) strike(part) at-him

'We have been struck by him.'

and by its position next to the verb. The underlying subject is optionally expressed as the object of the preposition ag, 'at', or, less frequently, le, 'with'. The latter has instrumental meaning. Dillon and Cróinín (1961: 41) refer to this construction as the 'perfect tense.'

This passive construction has its own autonomous forms. ¹³

- (97) Táthar buailte
be(aut) strike(part)

'Some have been struck.'

Example (65) above is similarly composed of an autonomous form of ta and a participle. The construction is straightforward and regular, involving two advancements to 1 in a single clause in the analysis in which autonomous forms are derived by $2 \rightarrow 1$ advancement of a dummy.¹⁴

To sum up part IV: If impersonal passives are derived by $2 \rightarrow 1$ advancement of a dummy, then the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law does not hold. Example (90) indicates that the proposed law is not valid even for clear cases of advancement to 1, but further evidence should be sought. Given even the restricted invalidity of the law, the unaccusative hypothesis, even if correct, has no predictive power. There is no explanatory profit to be gained from analyzing impersonal passives as the obligatory advancement of a dummy object.

V. The Universal Rule of Passive

I argue in A that the acceptance of Relational Grammar's proposed universal rule of passivization commits one to questionable underlying structures (where the underlying subject must be expressed), a questionable conflation of grammatical structures, viz. the passive and the reflexive medio-passive, and questionable theoretical apparatus, viz. the Relational Grammar 'dummy.' In B I argue that no need for a universal rule of passive has ever been established or is likely to be.

V.A. The Mechanics of the Rule

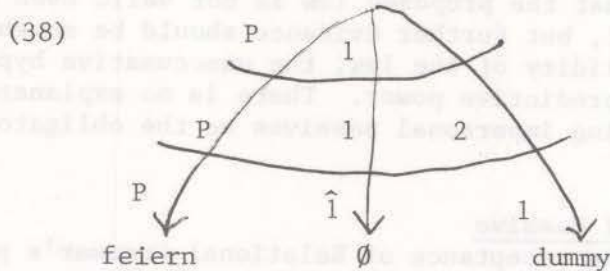
Passive is universally defined within Relational Grammar as the advancement of an object to subject position in a clause which already contains a subject. That qualifier in the definition--that a passive clause must contain an underlying subject--is hard to justify in view of the fact that there are languages, such as Latvian, where underlying subjects never appear in passive sentences (Lazdina 1966:165). In all languages I have been described, underlying subjects seldom appear in passives and it is almost never argued that these play a role in determining the applicability or form of passivization. But then they should not be regarded as part of the syntactic structure of passive sentences. The qualifier is required within Relational Grammar to distinguish passives from unaccusative advancements. But, as we have seen, the unaccusative/unergative distinction is not very fruitful. Its abandonment would obviate the need for unaccusative advancements, and the qualifier in the definition.

A second problem with the Relational Grammar treatment arises in regarding transitive $2 \rightarrow 1$ advancement as a characterization, i.e. a necessary and sufficient definition of passivization. Constructions of very different sorts involve transitive $2 \rightarrow 1$ advancements, however. These must not be conflated. As evidenced by their discussion of various types of passives in German (cf. above, p.), Perlmutter and Postal are aware that not all transitive $2 \rightarrow 1$ advancements need be treated the same or even marked consistently within a language. But then in what empirically testable sense are they all instances of the same rule?

This is not an idle or merely polemical question. In German, the analytic werden passive and the reflexive medio-passive apply to different groups of verbs. The outputs of the rule have different syntactic structures: participle plus werden forms a constituent while the sich in reflexive medio-passives has no very strong tie to its verb, but rather displays clitic properties. The werden passive applies to medio-passives, but not vice versa.¹⁵ There is nothing parallel to the impersonal passive in the

case of reflexive medio-passives.¹⁶ It is the task of syntax to illuminate these differences.

A third problem with the mechanics of the universal rule of passive involves the manipulation of "dummies," as explained in the discussion concerning (38) above, repeated for convenience here:



The first scruple one might air about the dummy inserted in the second level here is that it explains nothing about which verbs are found in impersonal passives. The verbs must be marked for dummy insertion much as they might be marked as subject to passivization.¹⁷ If the dummy is inserted, it must be advanced, resulting in an impersonal passive. The device is thus perfectly opaque. If we see an impersonal passive, there must have been a dummy and if there was a dummy, there must be an impersonal passive. The analysis is coherent but not explanatory enough. The sort of analysis one would prefer ought to link the possibility of impersonal passives to independently verifiable aspects of structure.

The use of the "dummy" here deviates from established use significantly. The device was introduced by Postal (1970:458) (as the morpheme Doom). Postal's original dummies had the same privileges of occurrence as the category "Noun Phrase", which allowed one to view the dummy as a sort of pronoun. Postal could even argue that the use of the dummy allowed the supposition of an underlying sentential form which is canonical with respect to sub-categorization.

- (98) a. Joan wants the man to go
 The man goes
- b. Joan wants to go
 * goes
- c. Joan wants Doom to go
 She goes

(98a) shows that the surface complement of want may stand alone as a sentence, and (98b) shows that it need not. Postal's introduction of a dummy pronoun makes sense of this contrast: the gap occurs where pronouns might occur elsewhere. He also showed that the usual rule of coreferential pronominalization would affect only those positions at which such gaps actually occur. Most importantly, Postal's use of the dummy respected categorial assignment to verbs. Go appears with nominal subjects, including the underlying pronoun Doom. Thus go could continue to be categorized: [NP___].

Perlmutter's proposal forces a weakening of the plausible and well-confirmed hypothesis that categorial structure in syntax is parallel to argument structure in semantics.¹⁸ Syntactically, it is quite clear that

German impersonal passives are formed from some intransitives which semantically have only one argument position. But Perlmutter proposes that all these verbs have two nominal complements (albeit one of which is only marked 'to be optionally added' in the base form of the verb.) The second, dummy NP complement, plays no semantic rule, and thus violates the syntax-semantics parallelism.

V.B. The Need for a Universal Rule of Passive

I take it that the appeal of the Relational Grammar treatment of passive is that it describes a rule which, whatever its faults, might be regarded as universally encoding passive. This is the one point at which no competition exists. But the appeal of this initially attractive proposal is, on close inspection, quite limited.

In an introduction to their paper, Perlmutter and Postal (1977:394), offer the following motivation for their attempt at a universal characterization of passive:

This paper has two goals: to offer an introductory, relatively informal characterization of passivization in language-independent terms and to draw some implications of this characterization for the nature of grammatical rules and linguistic structure in general.

Any adequate theory of language must be able to achieve the first goal. There exists a vast literature on the most diverse languages making use of concepts such as passive, passive voice, and passivization. While the phenomena in particular languages referred to in these terms are usually described as having language-particular and idiosyncratic features, what is striking about the descriptions in the literature is the fact that in using such concepts they appeal to a universal underlying reality of some sort. The nature of this universal underlying reality, however, is not specified. We maintain that no grammatical theory can be considered adequate unless it is able to give these notions substantive content."

If this is intended to support the position that a universal characterization of passive is a necessary feature of grammatical theory, it is certainly invalid and rather unencouraging.

The existence of a vast literature making use of a particular term or set of terms is invoked to justify proper categories of analysis. But the widespread use of terms may be attributable to dogma, misanalysis, encrusted scholarly tradition, or--and most to the point--the attempt to clarify alien patterns of grammar somewhat metaphorically. One can explain the novel by comparison to the familiar, even though this results in a sort of "understanding by analogy." There is no reason to criticize the analogical terminology some descriptions employ as long as the limits of analogy are not obscured. The descriptions remain understandable, verifiable and perhaps even enlightening. But analogy is an intransitive relation. Because a is analogous in some respect to b and b to c, it doesn't follow that a is analogous in any relevant respect to c. The passive in Irish is analogous to that in Old Icelandic, which in turn is analogous to the English passive. But it doesn't follow that Irish and English passives have anything of interest in common.

Independent of the analysis of a number of languages, no argument is likely to establish the universality of relational rules. There is precedent for the attempt to justify the need for syntactic universals on purely theoretical grounds, however (as opposed to justifications which purport to extract generalizations from the analyses of a number of languages). Chomsky is famous for the argument that the complexity of the language learning task, specifically in syntax, would be insurmountable in the absence of specific linguistic mechanisms which limit the class of possible languages. These limitations constitute universals. The validity of this argument has not been universally accepted, nor have its premises gone undisputed. The premises that the task is complex and that it is successfully executed (to the relevant degree of exactitude) have been challenged, as has been the step in the reasoning that proceeds from a specific learning task to mechanisms specific to the task.¹⁹ But the point here is more basic: even if one accepted Chomsky's argument, one could not expect similar arguments to be forthcoming about specific sorts of universals. The reason for this is not hard to find: even if one established that the expression of e.g. grammatical relations was complex in a given language, it would not follow that the rules responsible for this were complex. The source of the complexity might lie in nearly independent phenomena, such as the concrete mechanisms employed to designate grammatical relations.

This leads to a related and final criticism of the argument above. Perlmutter and Postal conclude from the frequent mention of passive, passive voice, and passivization that one must characterize passivization in language-independent terms. 'Passivization' is usually taken to be a transformation on sentences. The terms that are mentioned frequently in the handbooks are passive and passive voice. The former is a sentence construction which might be described by a rule of combination and the latter is a genus verbi, which is a lexical derivative of a verb. Neither is properly described by a sentence operation, much less a language universal sentence operation.

The probity of the claim of universality for relation changing rules depends only on the analyses which it prompts, and not at all on general theoretical considerations. But these analyses, as we have seen, are faulty.

VI. Conclusions

Part I demonstrated (i) that there is no reflex of a subject in impersonal passives in German and (ii) there is some advantage to regarding impersonal passives as subjectless. The counterclaim, presented in Part II, that subjectless impersonal passives should never be countenanced as a matter of principle, was shown to make false predictions in Part III (the Unaccusative Hypothesis) and to rest on an invalid principle (the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law) in Part IV.

One might nonetheless wish to analyse impersonal passives as having final subjects in order to preserve the universal characterization of passivization proposed in Perlmutter and Postal (1977). Part V argued that the adoption of the proposed universal rule commits one to questionable theoretical apparatus, questionable underlying structures, and a questionable conflation of analytic categories while making no clear empirical predictions. It is also noted that there is no clear need for a universal rule of passive.

I conclude, with Wackernagel (cf. his remark quoted as introduction above), that there are genuinely subjectless constructions, including impersonal passives.

Footnotes

* I am pleased to thank publicly Frank Silbajoris (Lithuanian), Ellen Uhlmann (German), Maire O'Sullivan (Irish), Ilse Lehiste (Estonian) and Hugo Bekker (Dutch) for their cooperation as native speaker respondents. Joel Nevis helped me with the Estonian examples. For discussion, comments and corrections of earlier drafts of this paper, I am indebted to Brian Joseph.

¹ Since relational networks lack information about constituent structure, it isn't clear whether relational grammarians would posit a verb phrase constituent in German. It is the existence of a subject which is crucial here, however, not whether the remainder of the sentence forms a constituent.

² Perlmutter and Postal (ms.:55) state that the "advanced l-arc is headed by the dummy es" in the case of German impersonal passives. Perlmutter (1978:156) refers to the Dutch er in impersonal passives as a dummy and on p. 158 indicates that the German construction is to be treated similarly.

³ Unless es is interpreted pronominally (unlikely) in which case it is a personal passive.

⁴ Cf. Note 3 for a qualification.

⁵ It is worth mentioning that the es in the other construction which Perlmutter and Postal (1977:413) regard as passive is a genuine NP and not a stylistic particle. Thus

(i) Es tanzt sich gut in dem Saal
it dance self good in hall
'It is good to dance in this hall.'

(ii) In dem Saal tanzt es sich gut
(glosses as above)

(iii) Tanzt es sich gut in dem Saal?
(glosses as above)
'Is there good dancing in the hall?'

(iv) P weiß, da es sich gut in dem Saal tanzt.
P knows that (as in (i))

This divergence of behavior is inexplicable on any account which conflates (i) to the rule of passive.

⁶ This argument (but not the others) carries over into Dutch.

(i) ...,zonder het te vragen
without him to ask
'without asking him'

*,zonder (er) op het ijs geschaatst te worden
without it on the ice skated to AUX

This indicates that Dutch impersonal passives are likewise subjectless, even though er, the counterpart of German es, is not quite as restricted

in its distribution. In Dutch, er seems to be a lexical accompaniment to impersonal passives in all clauses, both clause-initially and immediately after the verb in matrix clauses.

⁷These rules are described and justified in Lenerz (1975) and Thiersch (1978).

⁸Cf. Chomsky (1957:26) for one early use of rules vis-a-vis lines in derivations. Strata are more exactly analogous to the lines in generative semantics derivations, however, since in both cases rules may refer to information in more than one line (stratum).

⁹Perlmutter (1978:185) claims that the insight that there is any connection between impersonal passives and intentionality is due to a Relational Grammar. In the case of German, this neglects all the standard references: Behaghel (1924:211-215), Curme (1922:338) and Bierwisch (1963:49).

¹⁰My presentation follows Senn (1966:374f).

¹¹Ideally, one should consistently compare the meanings of the Lithuanian impersonal passives with those predicates which cannot form impersonal passives in Dutch allegedly because they are unaccusative. For reasons of space, the comparisons have not been reproduced. But the interested reader is invited to compare his (52), (54), (61), (66), (67), and (71) (pp. 169-170) with my (57), (70), (52), (50), (51) and (48-49).

¹²These examples sound abominable to many speakers of German, but are perfectly acceptable, if a bit pushy, to many others, particularly in the South.

¹³The significance of this fact did not escape the traditional grammarians. Cf. Christian Brothers (1910:101): "No, it is not passive, for it has a passive of its own." (Quoting O'Leary in the Gaelic Journal.)

¹⁴Bielenstein (1972:344f) reports on Latvian examples which appear to refute the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law. Reckendorf (1898:52) reports on Arabic that "von dem Medium wird übrigens auch ein Passiv gebildet," in fact, both personal and impersonal passives. Fuller, in an OSU dissertation in progress, analyzes the Arabic examples.

¹⁵Thus the meaning of those constructions in which impersonal passives and reflexive medio-passives coincide is consistently based on the meaning of the reflexive form. A full discussion of these matters requires a long diatribe on the various sorts of reflexives in German. This may be found in Nerbonne (ms.)

¹⁶Pace Perlmutter and Postal (1977:412-3). Cf. note 5 above.

¹⁷I.e. the Unaccusative Hypothesis could not be supposed to explain all failures of impersonal passivization, even in German.

¹⁸The hypothesis is explicit in Montague (1974:232) and Bresnan (1978).

¹⁹Cf. Putnam (1971).

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